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FOLLOWING SENT ACTION LONDON INFO CINCPAC JULY 21, 1973 FROM SECSTATE WASHDC IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, UK, US, XO

SUBJECT: JOURNALIST VISITS TO DIEGO GARCIA

REF: LONDON 05638, DTD 14 MAY 73

THIS CABLE IN THREE PARTS. PART I:

CINCPAC HAS REQUESTED APPROVAL TO ORGANIZE A MEDIA VISIT TO DIEGO GARCIA FOR THREE U.S. JOURNALISTS WHO HAVE APPLIED FOR PERMISSION TO VISIT THE ISLAND. ROGER PETERSON, ABC NEWS; BOB KAYLER, UPI BANGKOK; AND CARL MYDANS OF READERS DIGEST AND TIME MAGAZINE ALL HAVE STANDING REQUESTS TO TRAVEL TO DIEGO GARCIA. THE VISIT WOULD BE PLANNED TO UTILIZE NORMAL C-141 RESUPPLY AIRLIFT TO AND FROM DIEGO GARCIA WHICH ON ITS PRESENT SCHEDULE PROVIDES AN AFTERNOON AND NIGHT (17 HOURS) GROUND TIME ON THE SECRET

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ISLAND. THIS SHOULD PROVIDE SUFFICIENT TIME TO OBTAIN THE GENERAL ATMOSPHERE OF THE ISLAND AND RECEIVE UNCLASSIFIED BRIEFINGS CONCERNING THE FACILITIES ON DIEGO GARCIA. THE JOURNALISTS WOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY A QUALIFIED PUBLIC

AFFAIRS OFFICER.

TO FULFILL FOREIGN OFFICE SUGGESTION IN REFERENCE MESSAGE FOR A PRELIMINARY BRIEFING THE FACT SHEET. PART II BELOW.

WOULD BE PROVIDED TO NEWSMEN PRIOR TO THEIR ARRIVAL. IT SHOULD OFFER SUFFICIENT BACKGROUND ON THE ISLAND AND PROVIDE A GUIDE TO DISCUSSION PARAMETERS THAT ARE AGREEABLE TO BOTH NATIONS. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR RESPONSE TO PRESS QUERIES ARE INCLUDED IN PART III.

REQUEST YOU OBTAIN BRITISH GOVERNMENT PERMISSION TO PROCEED WITH THIS MEDIA VISIT REQUEST. WITH THEIR APPROVAL CINCPAC WILL BE INSTRUCTED TO WORK OUT THE DETAILS ON IMMIGRATION CLEARANCES ETC. AND ADVISE OF ACTUAL DATE VISIT WILL BE PROGRAMMED.

PART II: (UNCLASSIFIED FACT SHEET)

U.S. NAVAL COMMUNICATION STATION
DIEGO GARCIA
BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY

MISSION: THE MISSION OF THE U.S. NAVAL COMMUNICATION STATION DIEGO GARCIA IS TO FILL A LONGSTANDING NEED TO CLOSE A GAP IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY'S WORLDWIDE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM, TO PROVIDE FOR COMMUNICATIONS LINKS TO U.S., ROYAL NAVY, AND MERCHANT SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT TRANSITING THE INDIAN OCEAN, AND TO PROVIDE METEOROLOGICAL DATA FOR SUBMISSION TO THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION.

CONSTRUCTION AND COST: CONSTRUCTION FOR THE NAVAL COMMUNICATION STATION DIEGO GARCIA BEGAN IN MARCH 1971. THE STATION WAS COMMISSIONED ON MARCH 20, 1973, AND BECAME OPERATIONAL ON THE SAME DATE. CONSTRUCTION IS SCHEDULED SECRET

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FOR COMPLETION IN MID-1975. THE STATION WILL COST APPROXIMATELY 20 MILLION DOLS TO BE MET IN FULL BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

LOCATION: THE ISLAND OF DIEGO GARCIA IS LOCATED IN THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO, BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AT 70 DEGREES 25' EAST LONGITUDE AND 7 DEGREES 15' SOUTH LATITUDE.

COMPONENTS: IN ADDITION TO THE TRANSMITTER AND RECEIVER SITES, THE FACILITY WILL HAVE AN ASSOCIATED 8,000 FOOT RUNWAY, TURNING BASIN AND LIMITED FUEL STORAGE FOR FACILITY OPERATIONS. THESE CAPABILITIES ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO PROVIDING FOR REPLENISHMENT OF SUPPLIES, CHANGEOVER

OF PERSONNEL, AND SIMILAR ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE OPERATION OF THE FACILITY. BERTHING AND ASSOCIATED SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE FOR APPROXIMATELY 270 PERSONNEL.

PERSONNEL: THE STATION WILL BE MANNED BY 19 OFFICERS AND 235 ENLISTED MEN. TWO OFFICERS AND 22 ENLISTED MEN WILL BE ASSIGNED FROM THE ROYAL NAVY (RN). THIS IS A 12-MONTH UNACCOMPANIED TOUR COUNTED AS "SEA DUTY."

U.S.-U.K. AGREEMENTS: IN 1965, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT CREATED THE BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY (BIOT) AS AN ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY BY COMBINING ISLANDS IN THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO WITH THE ISLANDS OF ALDABRA, FARQUHAR, AND DESROCHES. ON DECEMBER 30, 1966, THE U.S. AND U.K. SIGNED AN AGREEMENT MAKING THE ISLANDS COMPRISING THE BIOT AVAILABLE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS FOR DEFENSE.

AFTER THE BIOT AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED IN 1966 THE U.S. AND U.K. GOVERNMENTS KEPT WNDER NEARLY CONTINUOUS REVIEW VARIOUS PLANS FOR MEETING DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. THE U.K.-U.S. AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE REGARDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FACILITY WAS PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED ON DECEMBER 15, 1970.

ON 24 OCTOBER 1972, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES SECRET

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AND THE GOVERNMENT OF GREAT BRITAIN CONCLUDED THE ADMINISTRATIVE AGREEMENT FORMALLY PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE JOINT U.S./U.K. LIMITED COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY ON THE ISLAND OF DIEGO GARCIA. THE AGREEMENT WAS CONCLUDED PURSUANT TO THE 1966 U.S./U.K. BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY AGREEMENT WHICH PROVIDES THAT FACILITIES SUCH AS THIS ONE MAY BE CONSTRUCTED ON ISLANDS IN THE BIOT UNDER A MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENT.

GENERAL: THE DIEGO GARCIA AGREEMENT DOES NOT IMPLY ANY EXTENSION OF A U.S. DEFENSE COMMITMENT TO THE INDIAN OCEAN. THE FACILITY IS IN NO WAY INTENDED TO BE INIMICAL TO ANY OTHER NATION'S INTEREST, NOR IS IT BEING CONSTRUCTED IN RESPONSE TO U.S. OR BRITISH SECURITY AGREEMENTS WITH ANY OTHER COUNTRY. IT IS, IN FACT, DESIGNED TO MEET AN IMPORTANT WORLDWIDE EXISTING NEED IN NAVAL AND AVIATION COMMUNICATIONS. MOREOVER, THE METEOROLOGICAL DATA GATHERED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE U.S./U.K. OPERATION OF THE FACILITY WILL BE AVAILABLE TO THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION THEREBY CONTRIBUTING TO IMPROVED WEATHER FORECASTING, AVIATION FLIGHT SAFETY, SAFE PASSAGE OF SHIPPING, ETC.

PART III

IN ADDITION TO FOREGOING, WE PROPOSE TO UTILIZE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS IN RESPONDING TO PRESS QUERIES. THESE RESPONSES ARE AN UPDATED VERSION OF THOSE CONTAINED IN STATE 200310 OF DECEMBER 9, 1970:

(UNCLASSIFIED WHEN USED IN RESPONSE TO QUERY)

LIST OF ANTICIPATED QUESTIONS AND APPROVED ANSWERS:

1. Q. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE FACILITY?

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A. TO CLOSE A GAP IN OUR WORLDWIDE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM AND TO PROVIDE COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT TO U.S. AND U.K. SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT IN THE INDIAN OCEAN.

- 2. Q. WHAT IS MEANT BY A COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY?
- A. AN ACTIVITY OUTFITTED TO PROVIDE COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT TO MILITARY SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT.
- 3. Q. HOW MANY AND WHAT KINDS OF SHIPS WILL THIS TURNING BASIN ACCOMMODATE?
- A. TURNING BASIN ACCOMMODATIONS WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO PROVIDE FOR SEA-BORNE REPLENISHMENT OF THE FACILITY.
- 4. Q. WHAT WILL BE THE DEPTH OF THE CHANNEL AND TURNING BASIN?
- A. THE DEPTH OF WATER WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO ACCOMMODATE THE REPLENISHMENT SHIPS.
- 5. Q. HOW LONG AND WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE RUNWAY?
- A. THE 8,000 FOOT RUNWAY IS FOR SUPPORT OF LOGISTIC AIRCRAFT.
- 6. Q. HOW MUCH WILL THE FACILITY COST?

  A. AS CURRENTLY PLANNED, CONSTRUCTION OF THE FACILITY WILL COST ABOUT 20 MILLION DOLS.
- 7. Q. IS THE U.K. SHARING THE COST?
- A. NO. THE PRIME INTEREST/UTILIZATION REQUIREMENT LIES WITH THE U.S. AND THE U.S. IS FUNDING THIS PROJECT.
- 8. Q. WHO WILL COMMAND THE FACILITY, AN AMERICAN OR BRITISH OFFICER?

- A. AN AMERICAN OFFICER.
- 9. Q. WHAT ARE THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT UNDER WHICH SECRET

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THIS FACILITY IS BEING BUILT?

A. THE FACILITY IS BEING BUILT UNDER THE TERMS OF AN EXECUTIVE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE U.K. AND THE U.S., SIGNED IN DECEMBER 1966, WHICH MAKES THE ISLANDS OF THE BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY (BIOT) AVAILABLE TO THE U.S. AND U.K. GOVERNMENTS FOR DEFENSE ACTIVITIES FOR 50 YEARS. HMG APPROVAL IS REQUIRED FOR INITIATING ANY FACILITY. U.S. TENURE IS NOT AFFECTED AS LONG AS THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT ARE MET.

10. Q. WILL NUCLEAR OR CVW WEAPONS BE STORED AT THE FACILITY?

A. IT IS THE POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES NEITHER TO CONFIRM NOR DENY THE PRESENCE \$F SUCH WEAPONS. THE INTRODUCTION OF SUCH WEAPONS ONTO THE ISLAND WOULD, HOWEVER, BE INCONSISTENT WITH THE STATION'S PURPOSE AS A COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY. THE U.S. DOES NOT EQUIP ITS FORCES WITH BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS.

11. Q. WHAT ARE THE POSSIBILITIES OF CONFRONTATION BETWEN U.S. AND SOVIET NAVAL FORCES IN THIS AREA, SINCE THE SOVIETS SEEM TO BE BARGAINING FOR BASES ELSEWHERE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AREA?

A. NO MORE THAN ANY OTHER LOCATION WHERE UNITS OF BOTH FORCES OPERATE.

12. Q. DOES THIS IMPLY A U.S. BUILD-UP IN THE INDIAN OCEAN?

A. NO.

13. Q. WHAT IS THE EXPECTED REACTION FROM ARAB, AFRICAN, AND OTHER STATES ON THE INDIAN OCEAN LITTORAL?

A. NEITHER THE MODEST SIZE OF THIS FACILITY NOR
THE SUPPORT ACTIVITIES PLANNED THERE SHOULD PROVIDE GROUNDS
FOR CONCERN AMONG THE COUNTRIES BORDERING ON THE INDIAN
OCEAN, WHO HAVE BEEN INFORMED REGARDING HIS SUBJECT.
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14. Q. HOW MANY U.S. AND U.K. MILITARY PERSONNEL WILL BE

#### PERMANENTLY ASSIGNED TO DIEGO GARCIA?

- A. ABOUT 275, INCLUDING U.K. PERSONNEL.
- 15. Q. HOW LARGE IS DIEGO GARCIA ATOLL AND HOW MUCH OF IT WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE FACILITY?
- A. DIEGO GARCIA IS AN IRREGULAR V-SHAPED ATOLL, ROUGHLY 14 MILES IN LENGTH AND FIVE MILES IN WIDTH. THE WIDTH OF THE ISLAND SURROUNDING THE LAGOON VARIES BETWEEN 300 AND 7,200 FEET. THE FACILITY WILL OCCUPY APPROXIMATELY ONE-HALF OF ITS 5,700 ACRES.
- 16. Q. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE POPULATION OF DIEGO GARCIA?
- A. THE ISLAND HAD NO PERMANENT NATIVE POPULATION. WITH THE CLOSING OF THE COPRA PLANTATIONS, THE WORKERS FORMERLY ON THE ISLAND WERE RETURNED TO THEIR HOMELANDS BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.
- 17. Q. WILL THIS FACILITY BE USED TO SUPPORT OPERATIONS IN SEA?
  - A. NO SUCH USE IS CONTEMPLATED.
- 18. Q. WHEN WILL THE FACILITY BE IN FULL OPERATION?
  - A. PROBABLY MID-1975.
- 19. Q. WILL FACILITIES OTHER THAN THE COMMUNICATION STATION BE BUILT IN THIS AREA?
  - A. NO OTHERS ARE CONTEMPLATED.
- 20. Q. WILL THE FACILITY BE OPEN TO COMMERCIAL SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT?
- A. NO. HOWEVER, INTERNATIONAL LAW REQUIRES THAT ASSISTANCE BE GIVEN TO SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT IN DISTRESS. SECRET
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- 21. Q. HOW WILL THIS FACILITY BE SUPPORTED.
  - A. FROM CONUS LOGISTIC BASES.
- 22. Q. WILL DEPENDENTS BE ALLOWED TO ACCOMPANY U.S. PERSONNEL?
- A. NO. THE TOURS OF DUTY FOR U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL WILL BE 12 MONTHS UNACCOMPANIED.
- 23. Q. WHAT PLANS HAVE BEEN MADE FOR THE DEFENSE OF

#### THIS FACILITY?

A. PRIMARY DEFENSE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ISLAND LIES WITH HMG, WHICH IS THE SOVEREIGN POWER. SECURITY OF THE FACILITY WILL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CINCPAC BECAUSE IT FALLS WITHIN HIS AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY AS DEFINED BY THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF. NO DEFENSE COMMITMENT IS IMPLIED BY THIS ALLOCATION OF RESPONSIBILITY TO CINCPAC.

24. Q. WHY IS THE FACILITY BEING BUILT WHEN WE ARE CLOSING BASES AROUND THE WORLD?

A. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS FACILITY WILL PROVIDE A BASIS FOR EVENTUALLY REDUCING OPERATING EXPENDITURES ELSEWHERE, MAKE POSSIBLE SELECTIVE USE OF US RESOURCES WHERE THEY ARE MOST NEEDED, AND FILL A GAP IN THE WORLDWIDE COVERAGE OF THE NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM AS EXISTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN.

25. O. WILL THERE BE ANY SHIP REPAIR FACILITIES?

A NO

26. Q. WHAT OTHER FACILITIES WILL BE LOCATED AT THE AIR-SECRET

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STRIP? (HANGARS, REPAIR FACILITIES, ETC.)

A. MINIMAL AIRCRAFT PARKING AREA AND A MODEST AIR OPERATIONS BUILDING.

27. Q. DOES THIS INDICATE THAT AN INCREASE OF TEMPO OF OPERATIONS CAN BE EXPECTED IN THE INDIAN OCEAN?

A. NO.

FACILITY?

A. NO SHIPS OR AIRCRAFT WILL BE BASED AT THIS FACILITY.

29. Q. IF NO SHIPS OR AIRCRAFT WILL BE BASED AT THE FACILITY, WHY DO WE NEED IT?

A. THERE IS A GAP IN THE WORLDWIDE COVERAGE OF THE NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. THE FACILITY WILL COMPLETE THIS COMMUNICATIONS LINK. ADDITIONALLY, IT CAN PROVIDE A MEASURE OF EMERGENCY FUEL SUPPLY FOR TRANSITING FLEET UNITS (SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT).

30. Q. WILL THE FACILITY BE USED TO COMMUNICATE WITH POLARIS SUBMARINES?

A. THE INSTALLATION IS NOT DESIGNED TO SUPPORT POLARIS SUBMARINE OPERATIONS. THE COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY WILL PROVIDE TIES WITH THE NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM SHIP-TO-SHORE, AIR-TO-GROUND, AND WEATHER COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN THE INDIAN OCEAN AREA.

31. Q. WILL THERE BE ANY RESTRICTIONS WITH REGARD TO US ACTIONS AND THE USE OF THE FACILITY SO FAR AS THE BRITISH ARE CONCERNED?

A. THE BRITISH HAVE CONSENTED TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF A COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY ON THE ISLAND.

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32. Q. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE DECISION TO CONSTRUCT THIS COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY WITH THE LARGER ISSUE OF SECURITY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN?

A. ON THE QUESTION OF INDIAN OCEAN SECURITY, THIS
FACILITY IS IN NO WAY A COMMITMENT TO ANY OTHER NATION
OR NATIONS. THE MODEST NATURE AND MISSION OF THE FACILITY
IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF CLOSING A GAP IN NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS.
AS AN EXAMPLE, WHEN THE APOLLO 13 FLIGHT WAS FORCED TO
ABORT ITS PLANNED TRIP TO THE MOON, FIRST INDICATIONS WERE
THAT RECOVERY WOULD BE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. DESPITE THE
FACT THAT WE HAD A US NAVAL SHIP WITHIN 24 STEAMING HOURS
OF THE INTENDED SPLASH-DOWN POINT, WE COULD NOT COMMUNICATE
WITH THE SHIP UNTIL IT HAD STEAMED WELL PAST THE INDICATED
RECOVERY AREA DUE TO GAPS IN THE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM.
HAD THE COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY AT DIEGO GARCIA BEEN
OPERATIONAL, COMMUNICATIONS COULD HAVE BEEN INSTANTANEOUS.

WHILE WE ARE AWARE OF SOVIET MARITIME ACTIVITY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, THE CONSTRUCTION OF A COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY IS NOT A RESPONSE TO THIS ACTIVITY AND HAS BEEN UNDER CONSIDERATION.

33. Q. WHY NOT USE SATELLITES FOR COMMUNICATIONS PURPOSES?

A. THE PRESENT STATE OF SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS DOES NOT PROVIDE COMPLETELY EFFECTIVE SHIPBOARD COMMUNICATIONS DUE IN PART TO EQUIPMENT LIMITATIONS ABOARD SHIP. MOREOVER, COMPLETE COVERAGE OF THE INDIAN OCEAN WOULD REQUIRE SEVERAL SATELLITES, AN EXPENSIVE UNDERTAKING. RUSH UNQUOTE ROGERS

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## Message Attributes

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